

Some Trees Suitable for Roadside Planting in the Philippines

By TEODORO DELIZO

The roads of the Philippines particularly through the lowland country with few exceptions are bare due to lack of trees planted along their sides. The patches of roadside trees only heighten the discomfort after they are passed. In order to make travel comfortable and the country picturesque, the government should not neglect the planting of trees along our roads. In selecting the species for roadside planting, the following characteristics should be considered:

(1) Wind and drought resistance. In considering trees for planting the resistance from windthrow is of prime importance because once a tree falls on the roadbed, traffic is disturbed. Also it has to be drought resistant because once a tree is planted it is seldom if ever watered during summer. (2) Persistent leaves. It should be evergreen. The leaves should be able to resist the effect of strong winds during storms. (3) Strong limbs. The branches should be tough to withstand the strong winds during storms and able to carry the leaves properly and avoid too much drooping. (4) Non-poisonous. Some trees although they have good crown form and leaves, possess poisonous properties. Ligas, *Semecarpus cuneiformis* Blanco, is a good example. (5) Should be deep rooted. Shallow lateral roots are undesirable because they interfere with the roadbed. (6) Resistant to disease. The road trees are subject to many kinds of injuries so they must be hardy and resistant. (7) Easy to grow.

In the selection of a roadside tree, the important qualities should be considered for each case as for example, trees that should

be selected for planting along the roads near the shore and those that should be planted far from the beaches are different. While there is no such thing as an ideal tree for roadside planting to meet the essential qualities, yet some of the species have special characteristics for particular conditions of the planting area. Such species as the following aside from those described later in this paper are suitable for roadside planting near the beaches where the soil is fairly deep and friable. Dugong late, *Heritiera littoralis* Dry., Banuyo, *Wallaceodendron celebicum* Koord., Supa, *Sindora supa* (Blanco) Merr., Akle *Albizia acle* (Blanco) Merr., Amuguis *Koordersiodendron pinna-tum* (Blanco) Merr., Katmon, *Dillenia philippensis* Rolfe, Sakat, *Terminalia nitens* Presl., and Boton, *Barringtonia asiatica* (L) Kurz.

Species suitable for locations that do not exceed 200 meters in elevation are Duhat, *Syzygium cumini* (L) Skeeb; Kalumpit, *Terminalia edulis* Blanco; Kupang, *Parkia javanica* (Lam.) Merr.; Pagsahingin, *Canarium villosum* (Blume) F. Vill.; Pili, *Canarium luzonicum* (Blume) A. Gray.

The most popular tree planted along our national highway is the Rain tree, *Samanea saman* (Jacq.) Merr. which is often erroneously called Acacia. This species is found in practically all situations of low altitude. It is a fast growing tree which endures a lot of abuse. Whenever it is pollarded, new sprouts readily develop. The crown is wide spreading and when grown in situations where the water table is high, it is easily

blown down by strong winds. Agoho, *Casuarina equisetifolia* Linn. is a medium sized tree adapted to planting along roads that are near the seashore. The leaves are small and scale-like so that the shade is not dense. The conical crown during the early life and the straight, tapering bole fluted at the base are points in its favor for a roadside tree. It is windfirm. Banaba, *Lagerstroemia speciosa* (Linn) Pers is a medium sized tree from 25 to 30 meters high. The large and profuse purple blossoms are practically the only reason for planting this tree. The flowers make a wonderful display when the trees are in blossom. On the other hand the dry fruits if not removed are ugly to look at. It is deciduous during the dry season when the shade is most wanted. It could be planted in all locations where the soil is deep and at elevations below 200 meters. Talisai, *Terminalia catappa* Linn. Talisai is specially suitable for planting near beaches. It develops a flat broad crown. The big leaves are supported by branches that are whorled in horizontal planes. During summer, however, certain species of caterpillars feed on the leaves and are a nuisance to people resting or walking beneath them. Sampaloc, *Tamarindus indica* Linn. is a medium sized tree. While the leaves are small, the branches are dense so that a fairly dense shade is formed. It is windfirm with tough limbs and a symmetrical crown. The fruits are edible. It is resistant to injury and takes a lot of abuse. Palomaria de la Playa, *Calophyllum inophyllum* Linn. The bole is generally short, reaching a diameter of over a meter and has a wide crown. It is windfirm when grown in deep soil. The branches are tough and irregular. Well adapted to situations near beaches and above high tide limit.

Anchoan, *Cassia javanica* Linn. A deciduous tree which produces whitish pink flowers that are showy and imposing. Aside from the beautiful flowers in its favor, the fact that the shade is light and the tree devoid of leaves during a part of summer

when they are mostly needed make its extensive use undesirable. Certain caterpillars provided with poisonous, stinging hairs, feed on the young leaves. When these caterpillars are in season, it is undesirable to stay under the trees. Mahogany, *Swietenia macrophylla* King. It is an introduced species from South America which has rapid rate of growth, and provided with straight bole and deep green leaves. At the beginning of summer, the leaves turn yellowish or pinkish and fall within a short period, but in a few days new leaves are formed. The dropping of the leaves in summer is not a great drawback as the tree remains bare for a short period only. It is fairly easy to handle, and when grown in deep soil it is windfirm and up to the present there is no known fungus or insect enemies. Ipil, *Intsia bijuga* O. Ktz. This tree reaches a height of 30-45 meters. The crown is large and irregularly vasseshaped. The leaves are a deep green. It prefers a sandy loam soil although it is also found in deep loamy clay soil. The wood is strong but the branches are brittle and sometimes are broken in strong winds. Narra, *Pterocarpus*, sp. This is a fairly fast growing tree with low branching and wide spreading crown. It sheds its leaves during the latter part of summer which character is somewhat against its use as a roadside tree. Aside from this disadvantage, however, it is wind resistant and makes a nice shade tree once the new leaves are formed. It is easily propagated from seeds, and endures a lot of abuse. The leaves are small. Mango, *Mangifera indica* Linn. This tree has a wide spreading, dense, as globe crown. The lower branches must be pruned early in life in order not to interfere with traffic. When grown in deep soil, it is windfirm. The most obvious objection to this species is that children attempting to knock down the fruits are deaf to the warning horns of passing cars and trucks. The leaves drop off constantly in small numbers so that constant sweeping is necessary.

Araucaria, *Araucaria excelsa* R.Br. This

is an introduced species found to be doing well in the Philippines. The horizontal branching, conical form and the persistent leaves makes it a picturesque unit of an avenue. While it is not yet extensively planted, it may prove to be a choice species for roadside planting in the future because of its hardiness and beauty. Liusin, *Parinari corymbosum* (Blume) Miq. This tree reaches a height of 45 meters. The crown is large and irregular. The leaves are evergreen and the branches have a tendency to be drooping. Sometimes the branches break in strong winds because of the thick foliage. Lago, *Pygeum vulgare* (Koehne) Merr. It is a tree reaching a height of 40 meters. The crown is irregular and has similar characteristics to liusin. Camagon, *Diospyros discolor* Willd. It is a medium sized tree reaching a height of 32 meters. The leaves are leathery green and shiny on the upper surface. The branches are tough and withstand strong winds. It is evergreen and could be planted at elevations not exceeding 200 meters above sea level. The fruit is edible. Kamanchile, *Pithecolo-*

bium dulce (Roxb) Benth. It is medium sized tree reaching a height of about 15 meters. The leaves are small and supported by few branches which are armed with numerous thorns. The crown is wide spreading and semi-open. Actually this species is planted along the sandy roads-sides in northern Luzon. The fruit is edible but the children do not usually bother with the tree because of the thorns.

Tuai, *Bischofia javanica* Blume. It is a medium sized tree reaching a height 25-30 meters. It has a fairly regular, unbuttressed, short boled with scaly bark. The crown is wide spreading. It is, however, deciduous, and becomes completely bare. A pile of leaves accumulate under the tree. Star Apple, *Chrysophyllum cainito* L. It is an introduced medium-sized tree up to 15 meters tall. It is a handsome evergreen tree with striking dark green leaves which are tawny yellow beneath. It is planted mostly in yards and orchards for fruits but those along the roads are doing well. There is no known fungus or insect disease of this species at present.

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